

**SYSTEM AND METHOD PERMITTING CUSTOMERS TO ORDER SELECTED  
PRODUCTS FROM A VAST ARRAY OF PRODUCTS OFFERED BY MULTIPLE  
PARTICIPATING MERCHANTS**

**Abstract of the Disclosure**

5           A universal automated order processing system  
represents multiple (e.g., hundreds or thousands) participating  
merchants who offer their products through the system.  
Customers become qualified for using the system by supplying a  
set of information (e.g., name, credit card number, shipping  
10       address) that is stored in a customer database. When a customer  
wishes to order a product, the customer calls the system,  
customer identity is automatically confirmed, the customer  
enters a product order number and the complete order is routed  
to the appropriate merchant with the information necessary for  
15       the merchant to fulfill the order. Available credit  
verification and other aspects of credit card transactions may  
be handled by either the system operator or the merchant. The  
system operator may offer revolving credit. The system may also  
be used to provide potential customers of the merchants with  
20       free product information. In certain embodiments, the  
processing system may be used to verify customer identity at  
security check-in at public transportation sites (e.g.,  
airports) or other public venues (e.g., concerts, sporting  
events).

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